

## Act 1

**Brenda:** So there I lay in this shrub with my skirt around me armpits, when this family came around looking for blackberries. I never saw that lad move so fast. Remember that we used to call him 'Flash' because he was so slow. He was smoking a pipe by the time he was twenty.

**Sally:** Oh, you are awful. Do you know what happened to him?

**Brenda:** Well, we lost contact after he finished college, but I might be able to look him up. I still know where his sister lives.

**Sally:** And do you know if he ever married?

**Brenda:** Of course he did. Children, mortgage, the whole thing. But I don't suppose that would stop you!

**Sally:** That's not fair. I know I have a bit of history, but I am really looking for the right man. I just haven't found him yet.

**Brenda:** Well, if you are looking for a husband, make sure it's not someone else's this time.

**Sally:** Well, I'll try, but I don't seem to fancy the men who fancy me.

**Brenda:** I thought you were a bit keen on Jerry.

**Sally:** I was, a bit, but he didn't hang around. Then he had that fling with Sharron and I never got back together with him. You know, one of these days someone is going to teach Sharron a lesson, teach her not to steal other women's' boyfriends.

**Brenda:** You know, I wish I could act like Sharron, you know, go out with men without making any real emotional commitment. But she gets all the men, and I don't even get a look-in. In fact there are times when I feel very jealous of her.

**Sally:** That kind of casual sex is not something I'd wish for. Some kind of commitment is what I'm waiting for. In fact I'm not sure that I can forgive Sharron for luring Jerry away like that.

**Brenda:** Perhaps you'll find someone tonight.

**Sally:** Well, maybe, but I won't hold my breath. Not with this lot.

[Sharron and Rosemary appear from the Cloakrooms, SR]

**Sharron:** Hello girls. Ready for the fray are we?

**Rosemary:** Don't be like that, Sharron, unlike you I am here for your company, not to pick up men.

**Sharron:** Well I'm not exactly on the pull myself, but if someone takes my fancy, who knows what might happen.

**Rosemary:** Well, that's probably the same for all of us. Trouble is, we only see the same set of men each time, and I don't really like any of them that much.

**Brenda:** I suppose it very much depends what you are looking for. You know me, I'm only out for a bit of fun, but if you really want a husband, I suppose there is always Jerry, or Barry if you are not being fussy.

**Rosemary:** Well, I have standards, even if you don't.

**Sally:** Barry would be ok if you could just get him a decent haircut and clothes, and a shower and point a can of deodorant at him.

**Sharron:** Other than that he's completely charming. Mind you, he does have a bit of a past. That should make him interesting.

**Rosemary:** What sort of a past?

**Sharron:** You'll have to wait until I've had a lot more to drink, when I become more indiscrete.

**Sally:** What do you think of Jerry, then?

**Rosemary:** Well, Jerry might do, if only he wasn't quite so prickly and shy. I mean, he's not bad looking in his way and he's got some money and a nice house.

**Brenda:** I know, but he's not exactly a barrel of laughs, is he?

**Sharron:** A girl wants to have a good time, doesn't she?

**Sally:** But he might just make a good husband. At least I used to think so before you came along.

**Brenda:** Yes. but would he be any good in bed? Mind you, I might just ask Sharron about that.

**Rosemary:** Really, Brenda, there is no need to be quite so coarse.

**Sharron:** Well it all depends what you want out of a relationship. I'm not sure that I even want a long term relationship.

**Brenda:** And I just want a short term relationship. Any short term relationship would do.

**Rosemary:** Well perhaps you ought to be at home looking after your children.

**Brenda:** Just because I come out once a week doesn't make me a bad mother, you know.

**Sharron:** You need to be a bit careful there, Rosemary.

[Darren and Barry come in from the bar carrying drinks]

**Darren:** Hello, ladies. Well you are all a real treat for the eyes, aren't they, Barry.

**Barry:** Errr, what? Oh yes, you're all looking very nice.

**Darren:** And which of you lovely ladies will I be dancing with tonight?

**Brenda:** We'll let you know at the time, Darren. Where have Nigel and Jerry got to?

**Barry:** Oh, they are just coming over. I think they are at the bar at the moment.

**Sally:** Are you keeping well, Barry?

**Barry:** Me?, oh, I'm very well. How are you? You are looking very good.

**Sally:** Flatterer! Well, you must save a dance for me.

[Nigel and Jerry come over from the bar, nod to the ladies and sit down]

**Nigel:** What's this, Barry, chatting up the ladies again? [Barry acts embarrassed]

**Jerry:** Leave him alone, Nigel. Can't you let him just get on with it?

**Nigel:** Well, he certainly seems to be getting on alright. Now if we could keep a bit of decorum here.

**Jerry:** Good evening, ladies. Very nice to see you again.

**Brenda:** Well, I certainly wouldn't mind seeing a bit more of you!

**Rosemary:** Brenda!

**Brenda:** Oh, don't mind me, it's just my little way.

[When the music starts, Sally and Brenda come over and drag Barry and Darren onto the dance floor. The others remain at their respective tables]

**Sharron:** How are you, Nigel?

**Nigel:** I'm good. Are you keeping well?

**Sharron:** Not bad, really. I thought you might give me a call.

**Nigel:** I really meant to. I just didn't get around to it.

**Sharron:** It's just the way that you came on last time, I thought you were keen on me.

**Nigel:** Course I am! Just didn't want to take things too fast, you know.

**Sharron:** That's alright, I wasn't being serious. But we did only have one date, you know.

**Nigel:** And very nice it was too.

**Jerry:** Nigel was just telling us all about it at the bar.

**Rosemary:** I really think there are some things you should keep private, not brag about things like that.

**Sharron:** For once, Rosemary, you have got something exactly right.

**Nigel:** What do you mean by that?

**Sharron:** Nothing, Nigel. It was a very pleasant evening. No doubt we'll get together again.

**Rosemary:** Nigel, just think for once how a gentleman would behave.

**Nigel:** Fancy coming out with me yourself, do you Rosemary?

**Rosemary:** Give me a call sometime, ask nicely and I'll see if I'm free.

**Nigel:** Make sure you're free. Give yourself a treat. You can give me a call, when you've come to the right decision.

**Sharron:** I think you might have a long wait there, Nigel. I'm sure Jerry would be much more of a gentleman.

**Jerry:** Thank you. Look I wondered.....

**Sharron:** What were you wondering?

**Jerry:** Oh, nothing really.

**Sharron:** Tell you what, Jerry, we can make some arrangements later this evening.

**Jerry:** Er..... right, perhaps you'd like a drink, I'll go and get some. What would you like?

**Sharron:** A Malibu would be nice.

**Jerry:** [stiffly] And what would you like, Rosemary?

**Rosemary:** A G&T, please.

[Jerry goes off to the bar - Darren and Sally return to the table]

**Darren:** Well, thanks for that. I enjoy a bit of a dance.

**Sally:** Yes, well, don't worry about my foot, I've got another one.

**Darren:** Yeah, I can be a bit clumsy. Tell you want, do you want a drink?

**Sally:** Anything to numb the pain. Get us a glass of white wine. A large one.

**Darren:** Sure.

[Darren goes off to the bar – Barry and Brenda come back to the table with drinks. Cue another song – Nigel leads Rosemary onto the dance floor, Jerry comes back with drinks and peanuts, and is pulled onto the dance floor by Sharron]

**Barry:** Anyone fancy some peanuts?

**Brenda:** The club is providing some sandwiches later, so I don't think anyone will want peanuts, unless, I need a bit of salt later, if I sweat too much.

**Sally:** Better not use that word round Rosemary, you know what she'd say. Horses sweat, gentlemen perspire, ladies glow.

**Brenda:** Well, I'll be glowing like a pig by the end of the evening. [helps herself to some nuts]

**Sally:** Don't offer Sharron, any peanuts, Barry, she's really allergic to them.

**Brenda:** Well she says that she is. Just trying to stay slim if you ask me.

**Barry:** That can be really serious, peanut allergy can. And lots of food is prepared with peanut oil.

**Sally:** I'm glad that I don't have to worry about it. At least I don't have to prepare food for anyone else. And thinking about that, how are your children, Brenda?

**Brenda:** They are fine. Mandy is looking after Tom. It's good to have her babysitting, now she's old enough.

**Barry:** How old is Mandy, then?

**Brenda:** She's just turned sixteen, and she's quite responsible. Tom is eleven, and he's not very grown up yet.

**Sally:** Mandy's a lovely girl, and she wants to see her mum happy.

**Brenda:** I know, but having children can put some men off. It is a lot to take on board, I suppose.

**Barry:** It shouldn't put anyone decent off you. I mean, if a man really likes you, he would like your children as well.

**Sally:** How did Darren get on with your kids, then?

**Brenda:** Alright, I suppose. I don't think it was that put him off. He still calls round occasionally. Perhaps he's just a big kid and enjoys playing on Tom's games console. Trouble is, he doesn't seem all that interested in me.

**Barry:** You know, if you ever need any shelves putting up or anything, I'm quite handy. And I'm very good with cars, as you know.

**Brenda:** Thanks, Barry, I'll bear that in mind. Look, one thing I meant to ask you, what did Nigel say about what happened when he went to Sharron's house?

**Barry:** Well, you know Nigel. He was boasting a bit, but you never know how much to believe with him.

**Sally:** Yes, I think Nigel's all mouth and trousers, if you ask me. You know what I mean, talks a better game than he plays.

[Darren returns with drinks and sets them out – glass of wine to Sally]

**Darren:** Alright then. Where have the others gone?

**Sally:** Nigel's taken Rosemary for a dance and Jerry went off with Sharron.

**Darren:** Sharron certainly gets around, doesn't she? She's quite the girl.

**Brenda:** Hmm.. I hadn't noticed you being all that fussy. You know, when a man puts himself round a bit, he's just a bit of a lad. If a woman does it she's a slag. You don't half have double standards.

**Darren:** Don't get me wrong, I like Sharron. But she never sticks with anyone, does she?

**Sally:** I don't think she ever said she would. She says what she means, does our Sharron.

**Darren:** Well, I suppose so. Look, never mind that now, I've got nothing to complain about. Anyway, it's Nigel that thinks like that, not me. So, changing the subject, tell me, Brenda, how are your kids?

**Brenda:** Well, Tom mentioned you a while ago. He's just beaten your score on Super Mario.

**Darren:** What about Mandy? Is she alright?

**Brenda:** Mandy's fine. She's looking after Tom.

**Darren:** She's a great kid, and really growing up into a proper little woman. I'll have to call around again sometime and say hello.

**Brenda:** I'm sure Tom would like to see you again. But Mandy seemed a bit funny last time I mentioned your name. She said something about you sending her some text messages.

**Darren:** Got to keep up with the new technology.

**Sally:** Nigel's seems to have taken a bit of a shine to Rosemary.

**Brenda:** She's all fur coat and no knickers, if you ask me. And she never tells you anything about herself, does she?

**Barry:** Do you think she's got some kind of secret then?

**Sally:** What do you mean? Some kind of mad husband in the attic?

**Brenda:** Has anyone actually been around to her house?

**Sally:** You'd better ask Sharron, I think she went for coffee once. All very formal.

**Darren:** Nice looking woman, though.

**Brenda:** No offence Darren, but I think you've blown your chances, there.

**Darren:** Nah, I'm sure she'll come round to appreciate my raffish charm.

**Sally:** Well, you just keep telling yourself that.

**Darren:** Do I detect a note of jealousy here?

**Sally:** Not unless jealousy consists of not caring what the hell you do!

**Darren:** Ouch! That really hurt. Time for a leak, I think. See you, ladies.

[Darren goes off to cloakrooms]

**Brenda:** He seems to have touched a nerve there.

**Sally:** I just know his technique. He tries it on with every woman. Even your granny wouldn't be safe from him. He reckons that if he propositions everyone, he's certain to score a few times. When I found out, well, it stopped me feeling a bit special that he'd asked me out. Made me feel like a mug.

**Barry:** Forget him. Not all men are like that, you know.

**Brenda:** We know that, Barry. And I don't suppose any other woman around here will fall for Darren's tired old chat-up lines.

[Rosemary and Sharron return from the dance floor]

**Brenda:** Hello, girls. Sorry to cut and run. Come on, Sally, let's go and freshen up.

[Brenda and Sally go to the cloakrooms]

**Sharron:** Was it something I said?

**Barry:** I don't think so. Darren just rubbed Sally up the wrong way.

**Rosemary:** No change there, then. Mr Diplomacy strikes again.

**Sharron:** He's about as subtle as a bulldozer is our Darren, and about as sexy.

**Barry:** Someone is going to sort Darren out sometime.

**Sharron:** But not you, Barry. We're all big girls now; we can deal with him ourselves.

**Barry:** I'm not frightened of him. I can handle myself.

**Rosemary:** I'm sure you can, Barry, but it's not your problem.

**Sharron:** And you don't want to get into any more trouble, do you? I mean, I know you are quite useful with your fists, but you don't want to start anything.

**Barry:** What do you know about that?

**Sharron:** Look, whatever I do know, I'll keep it to myself, right.

**Barry:** Yeah, sorry. I hope you're not a gossip. I'm trusting you, Sharron. Look, I need another drink.

[Barry goes off to the bar. Nigel and Jerry come over]

**Rosemary:** So what was all that about?

**Sharron:** Look, Barry's a good guy, but he made a few mistakes when he was much younger, now he's sorted himself out. I can't tell you any more, I just promised Barry.

**Jerry:** Hello, Rosemary.

**Rosemary:** [Frostily] Hello, Jerry.

**Jerry:** How are you?

**Rosemary:** I'm very well, thank you.

**Nigel:** My but you are being formal.

**Sharron:** Nigel, please, they have a bit of history.

**Nigel:** Oh do tell, I'm really curious.

**Sharron:** By all means. Mind you, I do know a few things about you as well. Do you want me to tell about those?

**Nigel:** Don't you dare! Look there are some secrets that don't need to be broadcast.

**Sharron:** I'm not talking about your performance in bed, or total lack of it, I'm talking about your wife.

**Nigel:** But I'm separated, getting a divorce.

**Sharron:** Have you told her that yet? I imagine she's expecting you back tonight, so don't stay out all night. And don't go telling lies to these ladies.

**Nigel:** How the hell did you know about my wife?

**Sharron:** You really ought to turn off your mobile phone when you are having an affair. I answered it when you were in the bathroom and had a nice little chat with her.

**Nigel:** Look Rosemary, it's not exactly true. You need to hear my version of it.

**Rosemary:** I'll look forward to that. Meanwhile, don't bother to call.

**Nigel:** Sharron, why did you have to interfere like that? You've ruined it for us both.

**Sharron:** Because, unlike me, you can hurt Rosemary, and I don't want to see her hurt. She's had a difficult enough life as it is, worse even than Brenda's, and she was dumped and left with two kids.

**Rosemary:** Don't, Sharron, don't tell, please.

**Sharron:** It's amazing how people like to trust me with their secrets, and I never tell. But you never confided in me Jerry.

**Jerry:** Eh? What do you mean by that?

**Sharron:** Oh, Jerry, you really ought to come clean about you and Rosemary sometime. It's nothing to be ashamed about. I'm sure you'd both feel better about it.

**Rosemary:** Sharron, I'm begging you.....

**Sharron:** [after a short silence] Alright. I won't say any more.

**Nigel:** So what is your confession, Sharron, in this game of truth and consequences?

**Sharron:** Me, oh nothing you don't know. You may think I'm a tart or a hard uncaring bitch, but I don't lie, and I won't live a lie. Like me or not, what you see is what you get. I like a drink, good food, nice clothes, good music and the company of men. I don't think that makes me wicked. You know what I am and you know what I'm like.

**Rosemary:** Look, Sharron, we're not having a go at you, we just don't want trouble. We all need our defences, to keep our few little secrets. So, please, don't say anymore.

**Sharron:** Alright, Rosemary, we're all friends here. Sorry if I caused any offence. Must have had a bit too much to drink.

**Nigel:** *In vino veritas*, eh! Well, don't I deserve an apology too?

**Sharron:** You! No, on balance, I don't think you do. Mind you, you're not nearly as bad as Darren.

**Rosemary:** What about Darren? What is he supposed to have done?

**Sharron:** No, I can only talk to Brenda about that. It's about her daughter, Mandy. I think I'll go and find her now.

[Sharron goes off to cloakrooms]

**Nigel:** Darren and Mandy. I wonder what that's all about.

**Rosemary:** Well I could believe anything about him.

**Barry:** Here comes Darren now.

[Darren returns to the table – everyone is looking at him]

**Darren:** Been talking about me, have you. My ears are burning.

**Rosemary:** You could say that, but we'll wait until Brenda gets back before anything more is said.

**Darren:** Can I have a word with you, Rosemary?

**Rosemary:** Alright, I suppose so. [They move upstage to talk]

**Darren:** Well, Rosemary, you know that I find you really attractive, and well, I've been rather let down this weekend. You see, I had a trip planned for a rather good hotel in London, and a show, a good show, and there would be time to do some West End shopping and have a good meal or two, and I've got no-one to go with now. So I was wondering if you might like to come along with me. It would mean sharing a room, of course.

**Rosemary:** This is all very sudden, but it is very flattering, and I'm not promising anything, but I think I could get away. Does it mean going down on Friday? If so, I think the answer is yes.

**Darren:** That's right. Of course, I do have an alternative. My brother's got a little caravan in Mablethorpe. We could go there, have a few drinks, a fish supper and a bunk up. What do you think about that?

**Rosemary:** Really, what kind of woman do you think I am?

**Darren:** I thought we'd already established that. I was just haggling over the price.

[Rosemary storms off towards the cloakrooms, fuming. Brenda comes back with Sharron.]

**Brenda:** I would like a serious word with you later, Darren. And in private. But in the meantime, I don't want to ruin the evening, so we'll just sit down and try to enjoy ourselves as best we can. And, look, here comes Sally with the sandwiches.

[Sally brings a tray of sandwiches to the table (or a plate if being mean) – Jerry also returns. They sit in couples on the two tables]

**Sharron:** Sally, Are there sandwiches alright, you know, with my allergy?

**Sally:** Yes, I made sure that there is no trace of peanut. I watched them being made.

**Sharron:** Thanks, you know I need to be careful.

**Barry:** Good sandwiches, these. You have one, Darren.

**Darren:** Funny, but I don't seem to have much of an appetite.

**Jerry:** Sharron, about what I was saying earlier.....

**Sharron:** Look, give me a call tomorrow, you know my number.

**Nigel:** Eh, Jerry, get in there my son.

**Jerry:** Shut up, Nigel. Mind your own business.

**Barry:** Yeah, Nigel, shut it.

**Nigel:** Sorry I spoke.

**Sharron:** Suddenly I'm not feeling very well.

[She gets up to go to the cloakrooms]

**Brenda:** Do you want me to come with you?

**Sharron:** No you stay there. I should be alright. [Goes on her way]

**Nigel:** Well, she certainly stirred thing up a bit tonight.

**Rosemary:** Been mixing her drinks, I dare say.

**Barry:** Well, she was a bit rough with you, Nigel, but you probably deserved it.

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**Darren:** She had a go at me, too.

**Brenda:** And you are such a sensitive little flower, aren't you? Look, I'm going to see if she's alright, she didn't look too good.

[Brenda goes off to the cloakrooms]

**Nigel:** I think Sharron's being a bit of a drama queen.

**Sally:** Well, she certainly knows how to make a drama out of this club.

**Jerry:** Look, Rosemary, perhaps we had better have a talk sometime.

**Rosemary:** Yes, maybe we ought to.

**Nigel:** And I thought you were pursuing the charms of the fragrant Sharron, Jerry, you smooth talker.

[Brenda comes running back]

**Brenda:** Quick, call an ambulance, Sharron's having some kind of fit.

END OF ACT 1